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Government Regulations for the Examination of Candidates for the Appointments to the Civil Service of the East India Company, &c.
Stanford, Charing Cross.

ALTHOUGH the above heading is that of a mere sixpenny pamphlet, it may fairly be considered as referring to principles of especial interest to such of our readers as are members of the Institute of which our *Magazine* forms the Journal. Such members, on perusal of the above pamphlet at our recommendation, will, we think, immediately detect, that what may hitherto have appeared to some to be so narrow a question as almost to be confined within the walls of the Institute of Actuaries, has now become in high quarters a question of the greatest public, financial, and administrative importance—viz., the question of educational qualification *versus* official patronage, as the basis of fiscal and civil employment. The result arrived at is defined by the words of the Committee upon whose report the regulations are founded, when they say—

“The educated youth of the United Kingdom are henceforth to be invited to engage in a competition in which about 40 prizes will, on an average, be gained every year. Every one of these prizes is nothing less than an honourable social position, and a comfortable independence for life.”

“Hitherto, the admissions have been given by favour. They are henceforward to be gained by superiority in an intellectual competition.”

Without pretending that the parallel is a close one, the lines of relation are still not so far distant as not almost instantly to recall to the well informed actuary what process was forming the only one current in life assurance appointments, and to thus second the public expediency of the modern process of examination on financial subjects, as originated by the Institute itself. Considering, indeed, that such examinations have now been in public operation for some years among members of the Institute, it would not be unfair, though perhaps not exactly correct, to surmise that such a provision for the efficiency of the officers of Joint Stock Insurance Companies may also have had some effect in suggesting the propriety of instituting a change of procedure as to the appointment of officers in the financial or civil service of the joint stock East India Company. Be this as it may, the open recognition of detailed education as the basis of qualification for financial employments is all that the originators or supporters of the Institute have ever sought to obtain even by charter, and it is for this reason that we think it right on public grounds to thus bring a pamphlet on an allied subject under the notice of the general body. It would be to overlay so limited a publication, to formally review it at any length; but the following extracts may be acceptable to our own readers as illustrative of the parallel, however distant, to which we have alluded.

The Committee upon whose report (dated Nov., 1854), the Government regulations have been founded, comprised the following eminent names—T. B. Macaulay, Ashburton, Henry Melvill, Benjamin Jowett, and John George Shaw Lefevre.

“We think it most desirable that the examination should be of such a nature that no candidate who may fail shall, to whatever calling he may betake himself, have any reason to regret the time and labour which he spent in preparing himself to be examined.”

“The whole examination ought, we think, to be carried on by means

of written papers. The candidates ought not to be allowed the help of any book; nor ought they, after once a subject for composition has been proposed to them, or a paper of questions placed before them, to leave the place of examination till they have finished their work.

“It is, of course, not to be expected that any man of 22 will have made considerable proficiency in all the subjects of examination. An excellent mathematician will often have little Greek, and an excellent Greek scholar will be entirely ignorant of French and Italian. Nothing can be further from our wish than to hold out premiums for knowledge of wide surface and of small depth. We are of opinion that a candidate ought to be allowed no credit at all for taking up a subject in which he is a mere smatterer. Profound and accurate acquaintance with a single language ought to tell more than bad translations and themes in six languages. A single paper which shows that the writer thoroughly understands the principles of the differential calculus ought to tell more than twenty superficial and incorrect answers to questions about chemistry, botany, mineralogy, metaphysics, logic, and English history.

“It will be necessary that a certain number of marks should be assigned to each subject, and that the place of a candidate should be determined by the sum total of the marks which he has gained.”

“We have, with an anxious desire to deal fairly by all parts of the United Kingdom, and by all places of liberal education, framed the following scale, which we venture to submit for your consideration:—

<i>English language and literature—</i>						
Composition	.	.	.	.	.	500
History	.	.	.	.	.	500
General literature	.	.	.	.	.	500
						<hr/>
						1,500
Greek	.	.	.	.	.	750
Latin	.	.	.	.	.	750
French	.	.	.	.	.	375
German	.	.	.	.	.	375
Italian	.	.	.	.	.	375
Mathematics, pure and mixed	.	.	.	.	.	1,000
Natural sciences	.	.	.	.	.	500
Moral sciences	.	.	.	.	.	500
Sanscrit	.	.	.	.	.	375
Arabic	.	.	.	.	.	375
						<hr/>
						6,875

“It seems to us probable, that of the 6,875 marks, which are the maximum, no candidate will ever obtain half. A candidate who is at once a distinguished classical scholar and a distinguished mathematician will be, as he ought to be, certain of success. A classical scholar who is no mathematician, or a mathematician who is no classical scholar, will be certain of success if he is well read in the history and literature of his own country.”

“When the result of the examination has been declared, the successful candidates will not yet be civil servants of the East India Company, but only civil servants elect. It appears from the 40th clause of the Act to be the intention of the legislature that, before they proceed to the East, there should be a period of probation and a second examination.”

“This examination should, of course, be in the four branches of knowledge already mentioned as those to which the attention of the probationers

ought to be specially directed. Marks should be assigned to the different subjects, as at the first examination."

"The time of probation ought not, we think, to be less than one year, nor more than two years."

"When the marks have been cast up, the probationers who have been examined should be arranged in order of merit. All those who have been two years probationers, and who have, in the opinion of the examiners, used their time well and made a respectable proficiency, should be declared civil servants of the Company."

"Thus a salutary emulation will be kept up to the last moment."

"Early superiority in science and literature generally indicates the existence of some qualities which are securities against vice—industry, self-denial, a taste for pleasures not sensual, a laudable desire of honourable distinction, a still more laudable desire to obtain the approbation of friends and relations. We therefore believe that the intellectual test which is about to be established will be found in practice to be also the best moral test that can be devised."

With such evidence of the encouragement that is being given for the "advancement of learning" in other spheres, it should certainly not be unpleasing to the actuary to find that some efforts, however humble, have already been made for a similar purpose by the members of his own.

REPORTS OF ASSURANCE COMPANIES.

Amicable Society.—Account of the Receipts and Payments of the Corporation of the Amicable Society for a Perpetual Assurance Office, for the Year ending the 4th day of April, 1854.

<i>Dr.</i>		£.	s.	d.
Balance of cash, April 4, 1853	.	12,152	0	10
Contributions received	.	69,809	6	5
Fines, penalties on readmission, &c.	.	183	13	6
		£.	s.	d.
Rents, viz.:—St. James's Street Estate	.	1,669	16	8
„ for No. 13, Serjeants' Inn	.	291	5	0
		1,961	1	8
Interest, viz.:—Dividends on Stock	.	15,059	1	9
„ Long Annuities	.	13,106	5	0
„ On loans on mortgages	.	4,797	10	0
„ On loans on the Society's policies	.	1,465	5	9
„ On Exchequer Bills paid off	.	232	12	0
„ Discount on advances on claims	.	58	0	2
		34,718	14	8
Repayment of loans on policies	.	4,177	0	0
New South Sea Annuities paid off	.	14,300	0	0
Sale of £22,000, Exchequer Bills	.	22,054	11	8
		£159,356	8	9
<i>Cr.</i>		£.	s.	d.
Purchase of £10,000, Three and a Quarter per Cent. Annuities	.	10,375	0	0
Loans on mortgages	.	29,500	0	0
Loans on policies of the Society	.	8,154	6	8
Carried forward	.	£48,029	6	8